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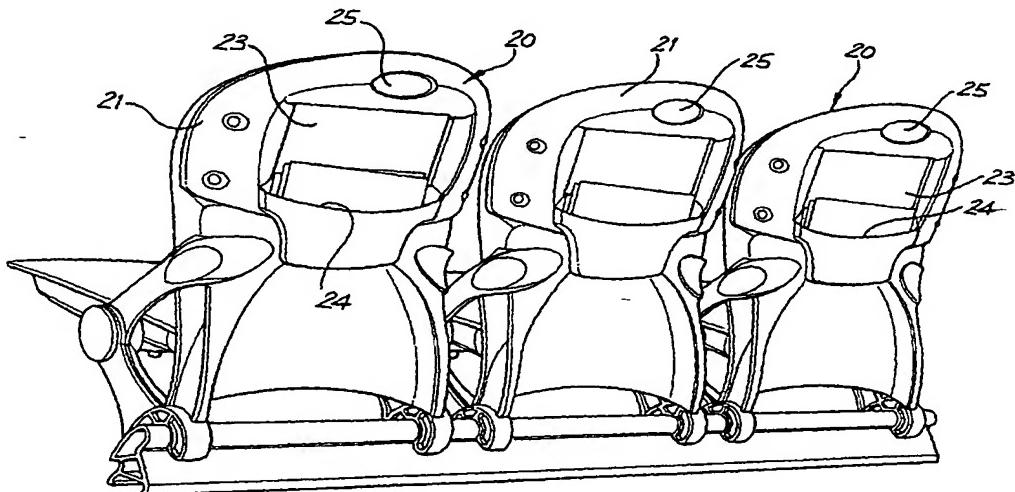
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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: SEAT SIGNAGE AND ASSOCIATED SALES SYSTEMS



(57) Abstract: The invention relates to seat signage and associated sales systems for maximising the business opportunities that can be pursued in relation to stadium or auditorium seating or the like. In the preferred form, seat fixtures (20) are provided with three means of advertising. The first means comprises badging (25) or the like which can be used to identify a party that has leased or otherwise purchased long term rights in the seats. The secondary means comprises changeable advertising display means (23) and the third may be in the form of a receptacle (24) for removable items such as brochures or programs that can be sold for shorter term promotions such as on a "per event" basis. The system provides a unique means of providing multiple income streams from a single source with the option of the advance income from the first means (25) funding the fixtures required for providing the fixtures that define the advertising display (23) and brochure (24) receptacles.

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TITLE: SEAT SIGNAGE AND ASSOCIATED SALES SYSTEMS**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to seat signage and associated sales systems and in particular to seat signage and sales systems for stadium seating.

5 The invention has been developed primarily for use in sports stadium advertising. However, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that it need not be limited to that particular field of use.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 The sale of stadium seating and the like as a form of investment property is becoming more common, but in its simplest form an interest in a stadium seat is not always recognized as a valid commercial investment. It is desirable, for diverse business purposes to enhance that level of recognition and to pursue associated opportunities.

15 The object of the invention at least in preferred forms is to provide means to meet this desiderata or at least to provide a useful business option.

15 **DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION**

According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided a fixture for a stadium seat, wherein said fixture is adapted to present preselected first advertising indicia mounted on said fixture or said seat, said fixture being configured to receive and present promotional items such that said promotional items do not substantially overlay 20 said indicia when retained in said fixture.

25 Preferably, the fixture includes a frame surrounding an internal region. In one particularly preferred form, the advertising indicia is provided on an inlay extending substantially across said region formed. More preferably, the inlay is integrally formed with said fixture. However, in other preferred forms, the internal region is left open such that advertising indicia provided on a corresponding surface on said seat may be viewed.

30 In other forms, indicia is provided on an external surface of said frame. Of course, this may also be done in combination with advertising provided in the internal region. The indicia provided on an external surface of the frame may be of a more permanent nature such as in the form of badging or indicia integrally moulded or otherwise formed into the fixture.

35 Preferably, the fixture or frame includes a recess into which one or more promotional item such as brochures, programmes or other items may be placed and retained. In one form, the recess is defined by the frame in combination with the seat

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— surface. In other forms, a blind slot or aperture may be provided in one of the external surfaces of the frame. Such a configuration may be most convenient for small format promotional items such as business cards, "Z-cards" or the like.

In preferred forms, the fixture is in the form of an attachment for a stadium seat.
5 However, in another aspect, the fixture is integrally formed with the stadium seat.

According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a durable seating sign including preselected advertising indicia, wherein said sign is adapted for removable attachment to a surface of a stadium seat. The sign may optionally include means to receive and present removable promotional items. In the preferred form the
10 sign is made from a durable plastics material and may be transparent to present indicia attached to a rear surface thereof.

According to a third aspect of the invention, there is provide a method for selling an interest in one or more seats in a stadium, said method including the following steps:

15 selling an interest in one or more stadium seats to an interested party; and
attaching to a respective surface of said one or more seats signage indicative of said interest.

According to a fourth aspect of the invention there is provided a method of displaying an interest in a stadium seat, the method including the steps of:

20 providing a sign indicative of said interest, said sign being adapted to be releasably secured to said seat; and
attaching said sign to a surface of said seat.

In a fifth aspect, the invention provides a method of promoting goods or services in a stadium; the method comprising the steps of:

25 equipping at least some seats within the stadium with fixtures configured to receive and present promotional items; and

allowing promotional items to be provided in the fixtures for presentation to stadium patrons.

In a sixth aspect, the invention provides a method of advertising goods or services, the method comprising the steps of:

30 equipping at least some of the seats within a stadium with fixtures configured to receive and present promotional items; and
selling to promoters the right to insert promotional items into said fixtures.

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A method of obtaining revenue from stadium seating, the method including the steps of:

— selling a long term interest in one or more seats in a stadium and providing a means to mark said seats with first signs indicative of that long term interest,

5 equipping said seats with additional means to display other changeable advertising materials, and

selling the rights to display said changeable advertising materials.

Preferably the means to display the changeable advertising materials is in the form of a fixture in accordance with the first aspect of the invention.

10 Desirably, the charge for acquiring the long term interest at least covers the cost of equipping the seats with the additional means to display other changeable advertising materials.

Preferably, the signs or fixtures are attached to a back surface or an upper surface of the seating.

15 More preferably, the signs or fixtures are shaped to sit neatly against the upper back portion of the seat.

More preferably, the signage or fixtures are designed for rapid and efficient attachment and removal.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

20 Preferred embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a front perspective view of a first embodiment sign according to the invention;

Figure 2 shows a front view of the sign of Figure 1;

25 Figure 3 shows a side view of the sign of Figure 2;

Figure 4 shows the first embodiment sign of Figures 1 to 3 attached to a stadium seat;

Figure 5 shows a front view of a second embodiment sign with brochure/program receptacle and dual advertising regions;

30 Figure 6 shows a front view of a third embodiment sign with brochure/program receptacle and single advertising region;

Figure 7 shows a front view of a fourth embodiment seat fixture according to the invention with open internal region and a receptacle for brochures and the like;

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Figure 8 shows a front perspective view of the fixture shown in Figure 7 attached to a seat;

Figure 9 is a front perspective view of a fifth embodiment seat fixture having an inlay in the internal region, a brochure receptacle and a badging region; and

5 Figure 10 is a front perspective view of a sixth embodiment seat fixture wherein the fixture is integrally formed with the seat.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

In the past, it has been known to sell an interest in a proportion of seats for a
10 sporting stadium or the like to interested parties. Typically these have been corporations wishing to secure seating for their employees or guests at various events held at the stadium. These seats, typically in desirable locations in the stadium, are enclosed within defined boxes which in essence, belong to the parties who have purchased the interest in the seats. These interests are usually relatively long term, that is for a season or a
15 number of years.

However, only a small proportion of the seats in any stadium can be included in any such boxes and the cost of "box seats" may be too high for some potential investors. Also, it is desirable to maintain a large number of seats available to the general public for each event.

20 To this end, the applicant has implemented a scheme whereby an interest in a seat or group of seats can be purchased by interested parties and those seats can then be used by the purchaser or made available to the public in a controlled manner. The advantage to the owner of the stadium is that interests in the seats can be sold "off the plan" to raise development capital. The purchaser of the interest acquires an asset that
25 can in turn be leased, onsold etc much the same as any other investment property.

By use of signs such as the ones shown in Figures 1 to 10, the seat can also serve as an advertising platform for the owner's goods or services. The signs shown in the figures are adapted to fit to particular models of seat widely used in sporting stadiums and the like.

30 The first embodiment signage shown in Figures 1 to 4 is formed from a shaped blank of plastics material having an outer surface 1 and an inner surface 2. The blank includes a top curved section 3 configured to complement a corresponding curve in the seat back. Adjacent this top section is a hole 4, sized to permit passage of a screw or

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bolt shaft 5 (not shown). Extending from a bottom section 6, are a pair of projections 7 which are then bent to form hooks 8 to engage a lip on a rear surface of the seat back. Such signage could also be produced using injection molding techniques or the like.

Once the hooks are engaged with the lip, a screw or bolt is passed through the
5 hole 4 and then fastened into the seat back. In other embodiments, a press stud or other friction fit configuration may be used. Attachment in this manner generally conforms the signage to the contour of the back of the seat, providing a sleek, attractive appearance as shown in Figure 4.

In embodiments using clear plastics material, advertising indicia can be applied
10 to the inner surface of the blank. In this manner, the indicia is protected from damage. Alternatively, if opaque plastics material is used, the indicia can be imprinted into or painted onto the outer surface of the blank.

It will be readily appreciated that different shaped seats will require alternate signage configurations. For some seat configurations which do not lend themselves to
15 signage designs of the type described above, the signage can be applied to a top edge of the seat back, or indeed, to the front surface of the seat back.

To complement this scheme for selling or leasing an interest in a seat and identifying this interest, other aspects of the present invention provide means for an ongoing revenue stream from each seat. This is realised by adapting each seat such that
20 it can receive and present a promotional item for another seat user to take. In this manner, whilst each seat may be separately "owned" and have respective indicia indicating that ownership or seasonal or multi year lease rights, a promoter may purchase the right to distribute promotional material in all seats in the stadium on a shorter term such as a "per event" basis.

25 This is achieved in the second and third embodiments by means of fixture such as that shown in Figures 5 and 6, which are adapted to be attached to a stadium seat by any suitable fastening technique. The signs or fixtures 10 each include a brochure or program receptacle 11 and one or more advertising regions 12.

Turning next to Figures 7 to 10, the fourth embodiment fixture 20 includes a
30 frame 21 surrounding an internal region 22. If the indicia of the seat owner or another interested party is provided directly onto the seat, the internal region is left open as shown in Figures 7 and 8 and is sized and proportioned to allow for a substantially unobstructed view of the indicia.

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The most convenient and prominent location for mounting the fixture is the rear surface of the seat back as shown in Figure 9. However, other configurations may also be used. The means by which the fixture is attached to the seat can vary according to the seat design.

5 Alternatively, the internal region 22 is enclosed and the owner's indicia is provided on an inlay 23 which extends substantially across the region. In another preferred form, the inlay is integrally formed with the frame.

The fixture also includes an aperture 24 to receive and present promotional items. As shown in Figures 7 to 9, the aperture may be defined between the frame and the seat 10 surface. Alternatively, a slot may be formed in an external face. This latter embodiment is particularly useful for small promotional items such as business cards, vouchers or "Z cards". The preferred form also includes a third indicia display or badging region 25 as shown in Figures 9 and 10.

The fourth embodiment fixture is preferably formed from a moulded resilient 15 material such as a lightweight polyurethane material, similar to that used in the manufacture of motor vehicle dashboards. This material is relatively cheap, hard-wearing, soft to touch and also will minimise damage in the event that a seat is dismantled and thrown or swung. However, any suitable material may be used. Also, it is noted that as stadium seats vary in form, the particular configuration of the fixture may 20 also vary.

In other forms, the stadium seat itself could be manufactured to receive the various forms of advertising indicia and/or include a recess or aperture into which the promotional material could be introduced.

The combination of signs, fixtures and sales systems of the various aspects of the 25 invention provide a unique and flexible means to add value to stadium and auditorium seating to make it an attractive and lucrative investment opportunity. The integration of features makes the system potentially immediately cost viable, as revenue gained in advance from the primary seat interest sales can be used to fund the capital expenditure required for the badging and fixtures required to enable the income stream opportunities 30 to be exploited.

Although the invention has been described with reference to specific examples, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that it may be embodied in many other forms.

CLAIMS

1. A fixture for a stadium seat, wherein said fixture is adapted to present preselected first advertising indicia mounted on said fixture or said seat, said fixture being configured to receive and present promotional items such that said promotional items do not substantially overlay said indicia when retained in said fixture.
- 5 2. A fixture according to claim 1, including a frame surrounding an internal region adapted to present said preselected first advertising indicia.
3. A fixture according to claim 2, wherein said preselected first advertising indicia is mounted on an inlay that extends substantially across the internal region.
- 10 4. A fixture according to claim 2, wherein the preselected first advertising indicia is mounted on an inlay which is integrally formed with said fixture.
5. A fixture according to claim 2, wherein the internal region is left open such that advertising indicia provided on a corresponding surface on said seat may be viewed through said the frame.
- 15 6. A fixture according to any one of claims 2 to 5, wherein indicia is also provided on an external surface of said frame.
7. A fixture according to claim 6, wherein the indicia provided on the external surface of the frame is in the form of badging.
8. A fixture according to any one of the preceding claims, including a recess configured to receive and present removable promotional items.
- 20 9. A fixture according to claim 8, wherein the recess is defined by the frame in combination with the seat surface.
10. A fixture according to claim 8, wherein the recess is provided as a blind opening in one of the external surfaces of the fixture.
- 25 11. A fixture according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the fixture is integrally formed with the stadium seat.
12. A fixture according to any one of claims 1 to 11 which is formed from a resilient moulded material.
- 30 13. A durable seating sign including preselected advertising indicia, wherein said sign is adapted for removable attachment to a surface of the stadium seat.
14. A method for selling an interest in one or more seats in a stadium, said method including the following steps:

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selling an interest in one or more stadium seats to an interested party; and attaching to a respective surface of said one or more seats signage indicative of said interest.

15. A method of displaying an interest in a stadium seat, the method including the
5 steps of:

providing a sign indicative of said interest, said sign being adapted to be releasably secured to said seat, and

attaching said sign to a surface of said seat.

16. A method of promoting goods or services in a stadium, the method comprising
10 the steps of:

equipping at least some seats within the stadium with fixtures configured to receive and present promotional items; and

allowing promotional items to be provided in the fixtures for presentation to stadium patrons.

15 17. A method of advertising goods or services, the method comprising the steps of:

equipping at least some of the seats within a stadium with fixtures configured to receive and present promotional items; and

selling to promoters the right to insert promotional items into said fixtures.

18. A method of obtaining revenue from stadium seating, the method including the
20 steps of:

selling a long term interest in one or more seats in a stadium and providing a means to mark said seats with first signs indicative of that long term interest,

equipping said seats with additional means to display other changeable advertising materials, and

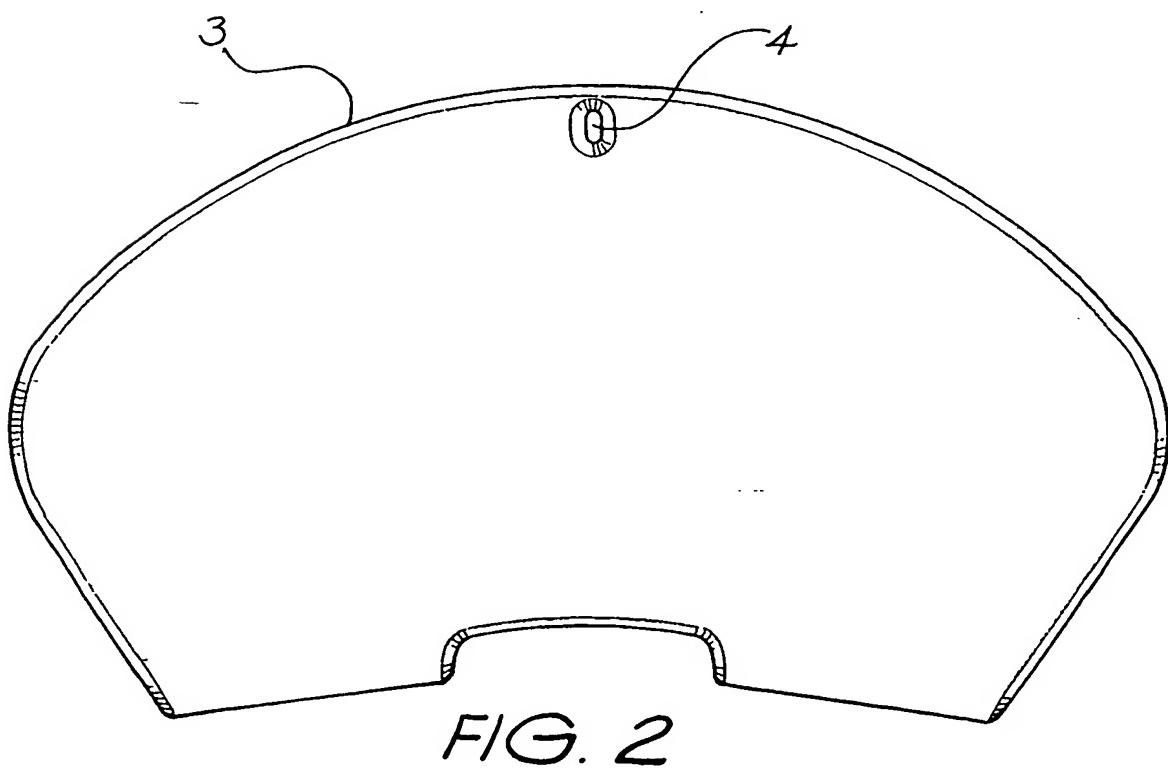
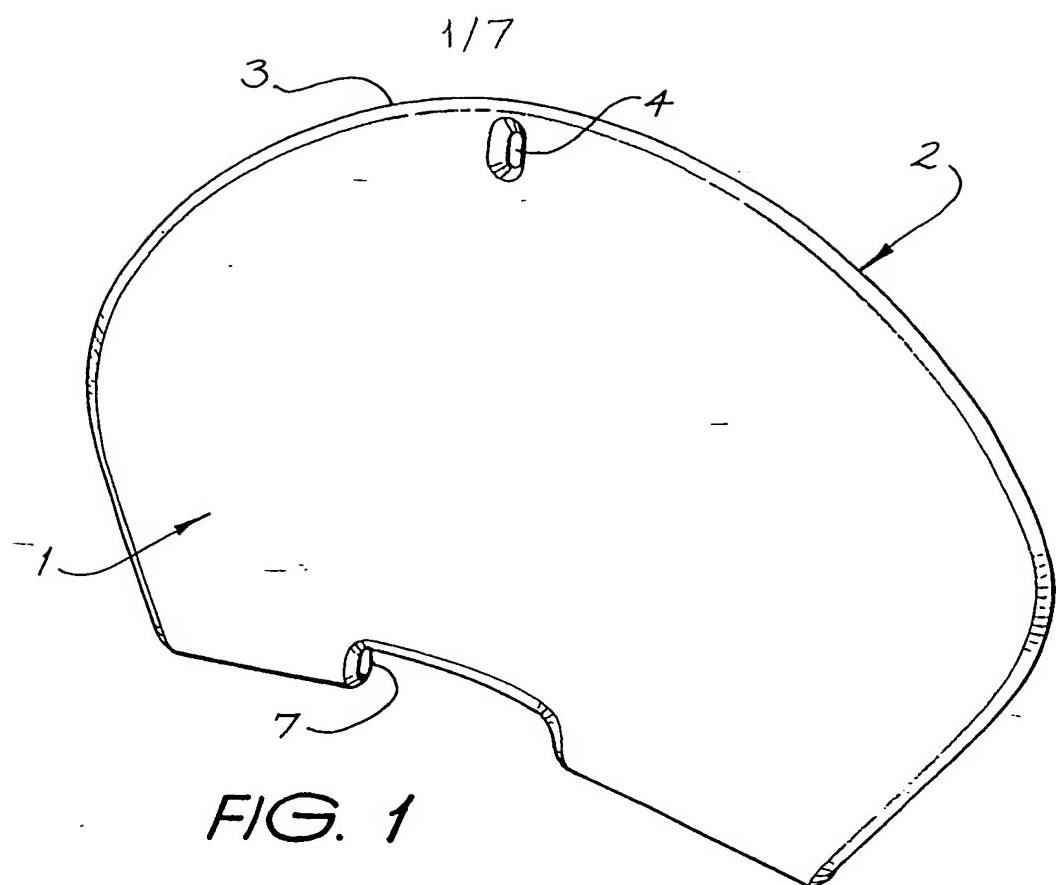
25 selling the rights to display said changeable advertising materials.

19. A method of obtaining revenue from stadium seating according to claim 17, wherein the step of equipping seats with additional means to display other changeable advertising materials includes providing fixtures configured to receive and present removable promotional items.

30 20. A method according to claim 18 or claim 19 wherein the revenue from sales of the long term interest funds the provision of the additional means to display other changeable advertising materials.

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21. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 20, wherein the fixture is configured in accordance with any one of claims 1 to 12.



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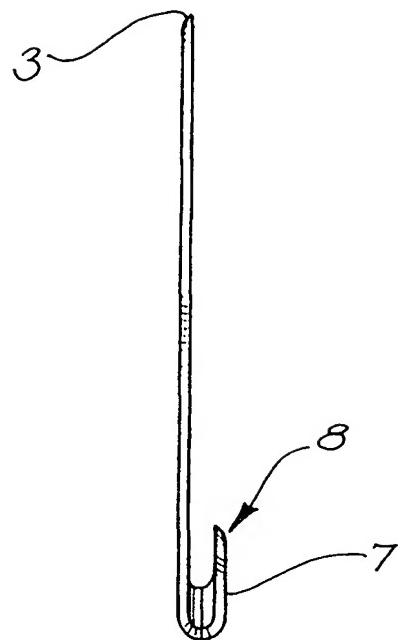


FIG. 3

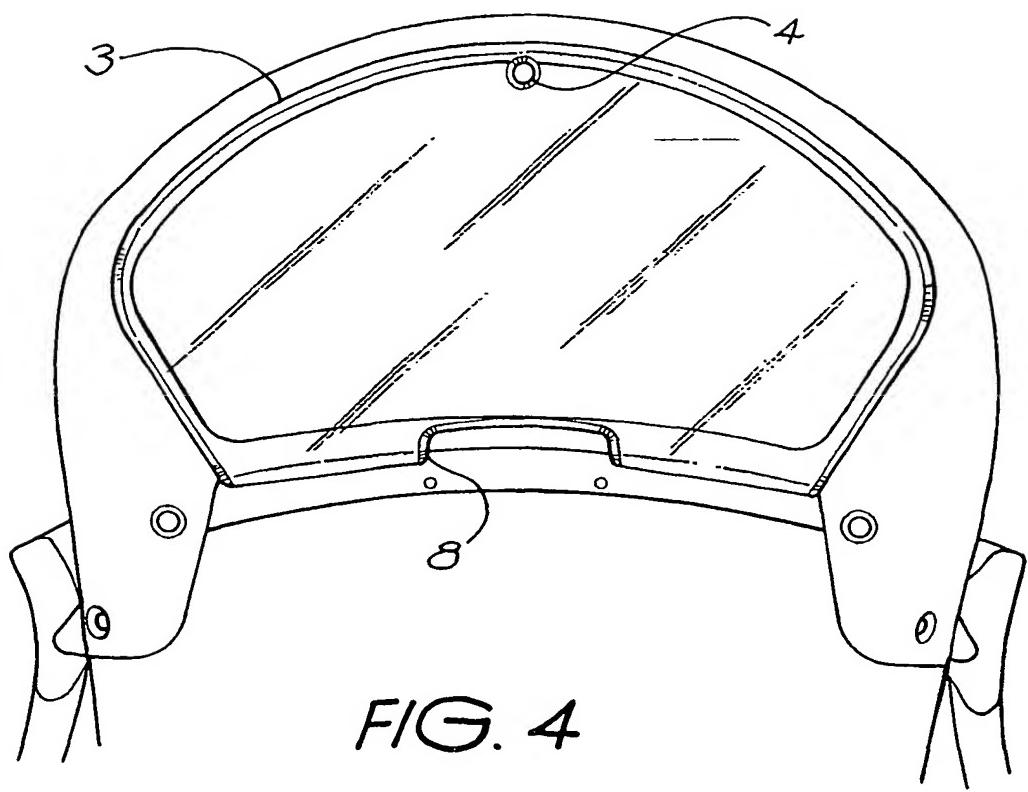


FIG. 4

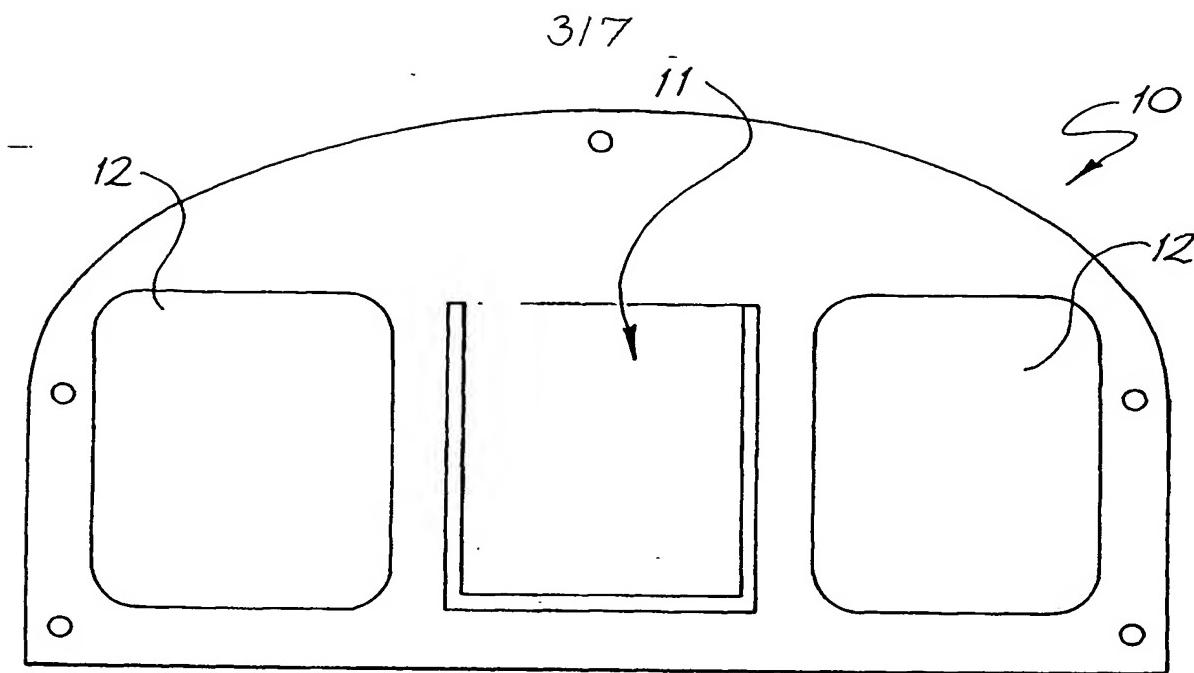


FIG. 5

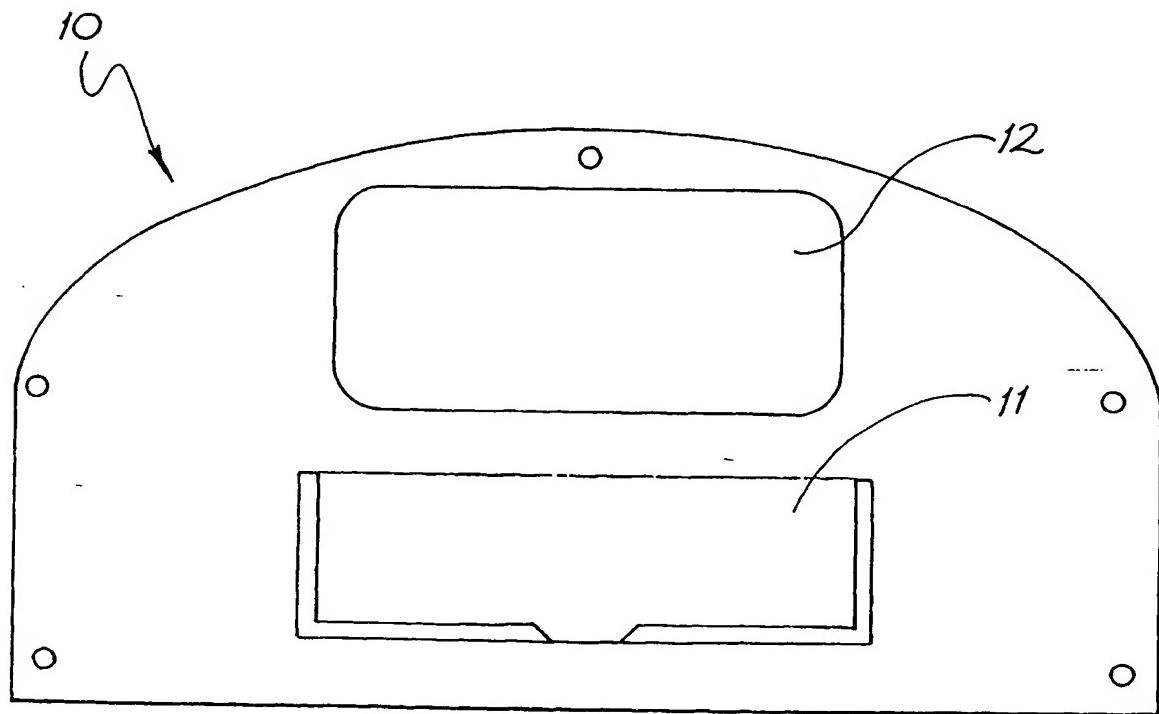


FIG. 6

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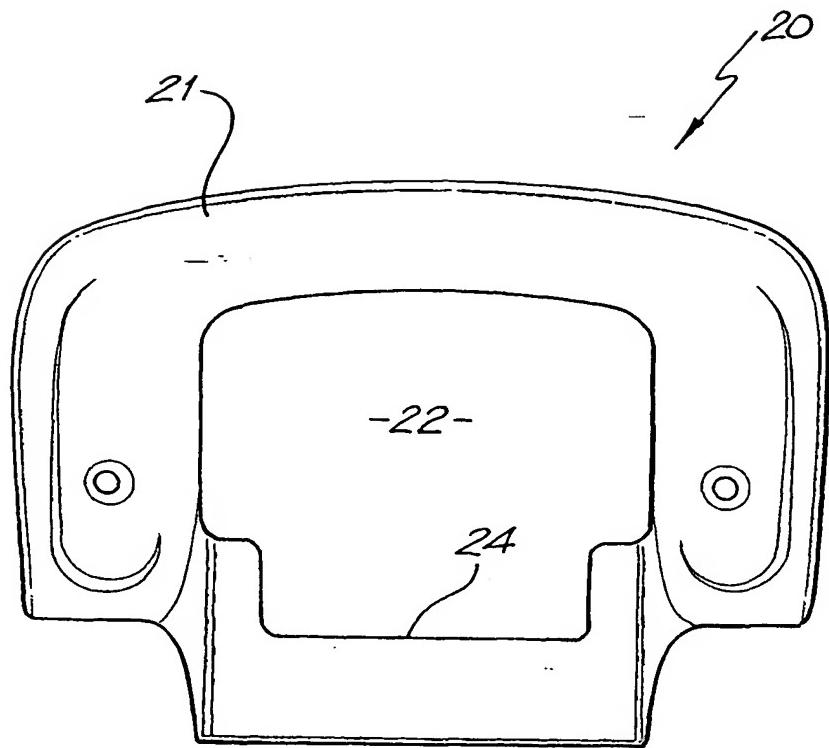


FIG. 7

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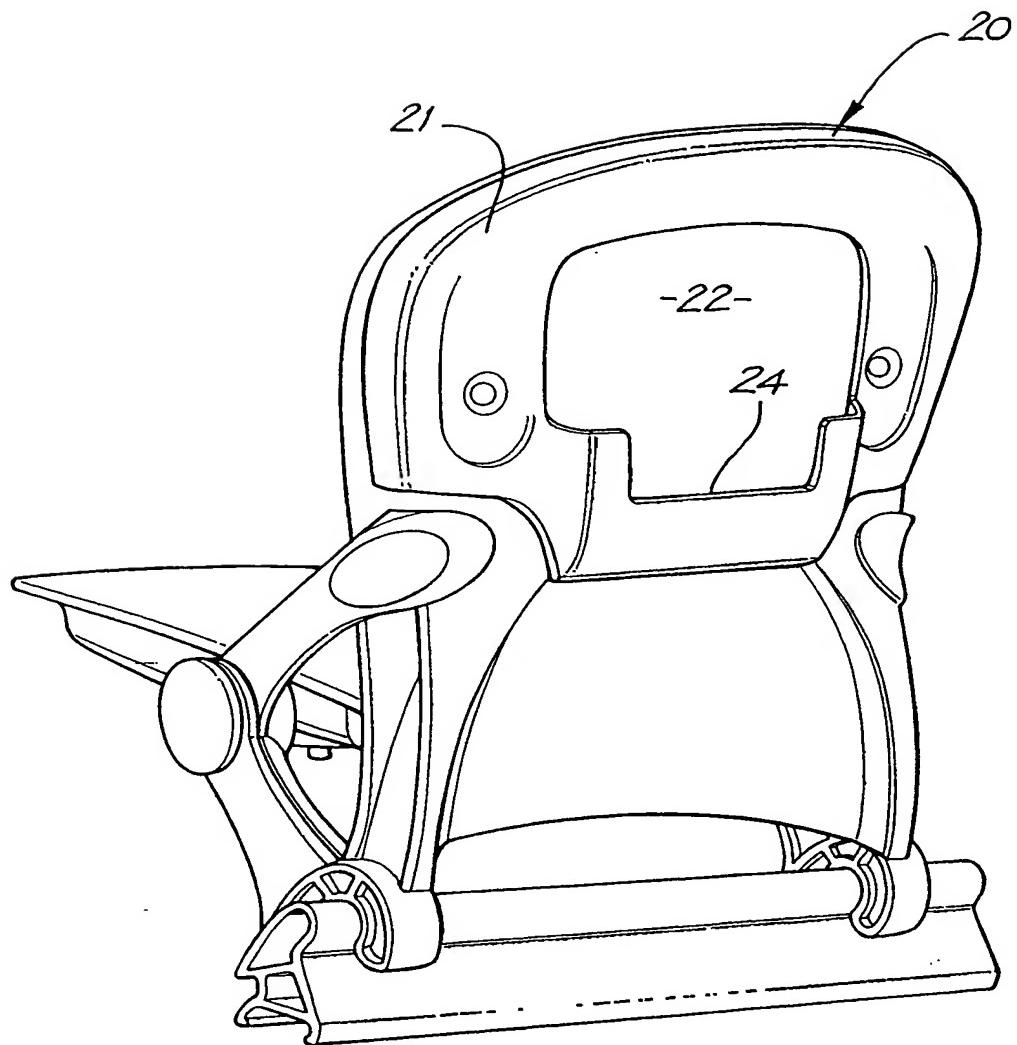


FIG. 8

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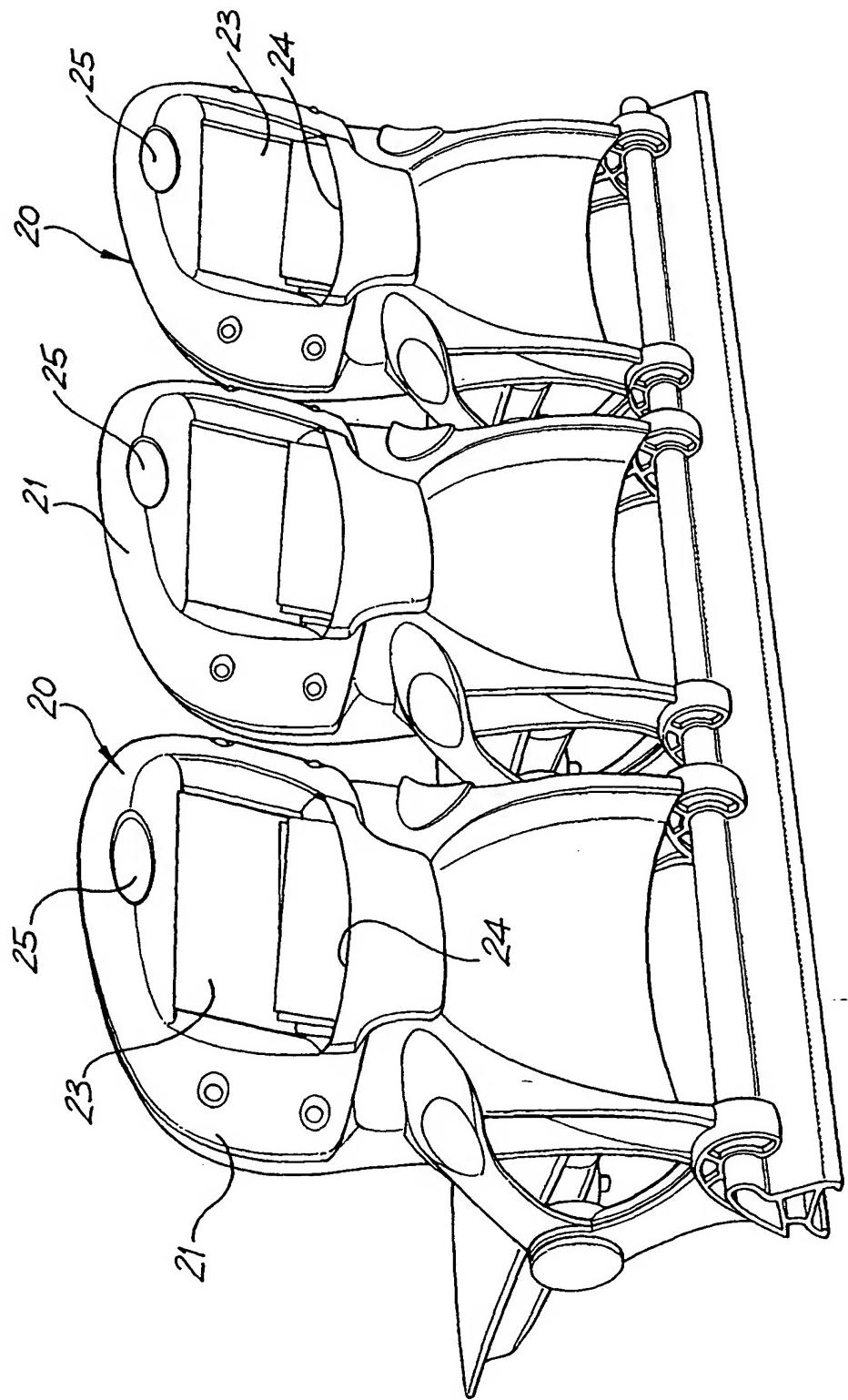


FIG. 9

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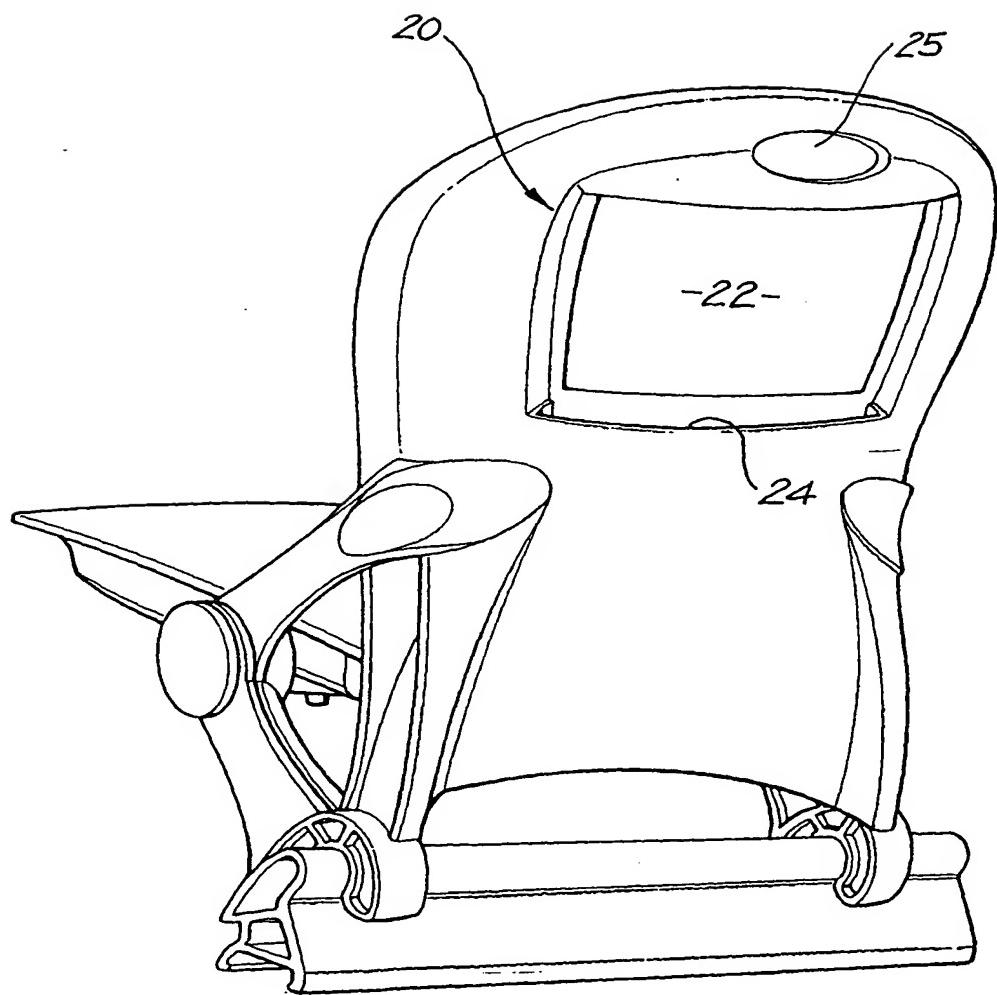


FIG. 10

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU01/01352

A. — CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER		
Int. Cl. ⁷ : A47C 7/62, G09F 23/00		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) DWPI, JAPIO (A47C/ic or G09F 23/00) + keywords: seat or chair or promo or advert or sign		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 97/42858 A (CHATAIGNIER et al) 20 November 1997. See page 8 line29 - page 9 line 4 ("23" is an advertisement panel) and figure 1.	1-21
X	FR 2412131 A (GIANNINI) 13 July 1979. See page 1 lines 21-23 and figure 1.	1-21
X	WO 97/26811 A (ANDERSEN) 31 July 1997. See abstract.	1-21
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family
Date of the actual completion of the international search 30 November 2001	Date of mailing of the international search report 6 DEC 2001	
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA - E-mail address: pct@ipaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized officer F.C.PEARSON Telephone No.: (02) 62832195	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU01/01352

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 98/24689 A (DANESI) 11 June 1998. See abstract.	1-21

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

International application No.
PCT/AU01/01352

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report	Patent Family Member
NIL	
END OF ANNEX	